

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (ORIGINAL) A method of integrating product information management with vehicle design, said method comprising the steps of

selecting a vehicle program requirement from a library stored in a memory of a computer system, wherein the library is accessed through an information portal on the computer system;

selecting an information database containing information related to the design of the vehicle from the library, wherein the information database is accessed through the information portal;

determining if the information from the information database correlates with the program requirement; and

using the information from the information database in the design of the vehicle, if the information from the information database correlates with the program requirement.

2. (ORIGINAL) A method as set forth in claim 1 including the step of selecting through the information portal additional information for determining if the information from the information database correlates with the program requirement, if the information from the information database does not correlate with the program requirement.

3. (ORIGINAL) A method as set forth in claim 2 including the step of determining if a portion of the information from the information database correlates with the program requirement based on the additional information.

4. (ORIGINAL) A method as set forth in claim 3 including the step of using the portion of the information from the information database that correlates with the program requirement in the design of the vehicle, if a portion of the information from the information database correlates with the program requirement.

5. (ORIGINAL) A method as set forth in claim 4 including the step of selecting through the information portal additional information regarding the design of the vehicle.

6. (ORIGINAL) A method as set forth in claim 5 including the step of using the additional information to determine whether to generate new information for use in the design of the vehicle and generating new information if determined that the new information should be generated.

7. (ORIGINAL) A method of integrating product information management with vehicle design, said method comprising the steps of:

selecting a vehicle program requirement from a library stored in a memory of a computer system, wherein the library is accessed through a web-based information portal on the computer system;

selecting an information database containing information related to the design of the vehicle from the library, wherein the information database is accessed through the information portal;

determining if the information from the information database correlates with the program requirement;

using the information from the information database in the design of the vehicle, if the information from the information database correlates with the program requirement;

selecting through the information portal additional information for determining if the information from the information database correlates with the program requirement, if the information from the information database does not correlate with the program requirement;

determining if a portion of the information from the information database correlates with the program requirement based on the additional information; and

using the portion of the information from the information database that correlates with the program requirement in the design of the vehicle.

8. (ORIGINAL) A method as set forth in claim 7 including the step of selecting through the information portal additional information regarding the design of the vehicle.

9. (ORIGINAL) A method as set forth in claim 8 including the step of using the additional information to determine whether to generate new information for use in the design of the vehicle and generating new information if determined that the new information should be generated.

10. (ORIGINAL) A method of integrating product information management with vehicle design to verify existing information, using a computer system having a memory, a display device and a user interactive device, said method comprising the steps of:

selecting a vehicle program requirement for the design of the vehicle from a library stored in a memory of the computer system, wherein the library is access through a web-based information portal displayed on the display device;

selecting an information database of verification information for the design of the vehicle, wherein the information database is accessed through the information portal;

determining if the verification information from the information database correlates with the program requirement;

using the information database in the design of the vehicle if the verification information correlates with the program requirement;

selecting through the information portal additional information regarding the design of the vehicle;

using the additional information to determine if a portion of the verification information correlates with the program requirement;

using the portion of the verification information that correlates with the program requirement if determined that a portion of the verification information correlates with the program requirement; and

generating new information if a portion of the verification information does not correlate with the program requirement.

11. (ORIGINAL) A method as set forth in claim 10 including the step of determining through the information portal if a condition is known by which the verification information was generated, if a portion of the verification information correlates with the program requirement.

12. (ORIGINAL) A method as set forth in claim 11 including the step of generating new verification information if the condition by which the verification information was generated is not known and using the new verification information in the design of the vehicle.

13. (ORIGINAL) A method as set forth in claim 11 including the step of determining confidence in the portion of the verification information that correlates with the program requirement if the condition by which the verification information is generated is known.

14. (ORIGINAL) A method as set forth in claim 13 including the step of performing a computer-aided engineering analysis of the verification information if not confident in the verification information.

15. (ORIGINAL) A method as set forth in claim 14 including the step of using the portion of the verification information and the results of the computer-aided engineering analysis in the design of the vehicle if confident in the computer-aided engineering analysis.

16. (ORIGINAL) A method as set forth in claim 13 including the step of using the portion of the verification information in the design of the vehicle if confident in the verification information.